

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-15

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 CCO-00 /016 R

66011

DRAFTED BY D:DHWOOD

APPROVED BY D:DHWOOD

S/S:MR ORTIZ

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P 302105Z JUL 76 ZFF4

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMCONSUL AUCKLAND PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 189523

TODEP 07

FOLLOWING REPEAT MANILA 11210 ACTION SECSTATE INFO

CINCPAC 9 JUL 76

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 11210

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, RP

SUBJECT: MARCOS' REMARKS ON CONSTITUTION

REF: MANILA 10890

BEGIN SUMMARY: PRESIDENT MARCOS HAS RESTATED MARTIAL LAW
REGIME'S POSITION THAT IT HAS BEEN AND WILL CONTINUE TO BE
GUIDED BY PHILIPPINE CONSTITUTION. MARCOS' SPEECH COUNTER-
ACTS THE TOUGH STANCE AGAINST REGIME'S OPPONENTS ADOPTED
LAST WEEK BY DEFENSE SECRETARY ENRILE AND RETURNS TO
STANDARD LINE THAT PHILIPPINES IS UNDER "SMILING MARTIAL
LAW." END SUMMARY.

1. PRESIDENT MARCOS SPOKE JULY 28 AT MALACANANG INDUCTION

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SEREMONY OF NEW OFFICERS OF PHILIPPINE CONSTITUTIONAL

ASSOCIATION (PHILCONSA). ACCORDING TO THE PRESS, WHICH GAVE FRONT-PAGE COVERAGE TO HIS REMARKS (TEXT OF SPEECH UNAVAILABLE) MARCOS REITERATED TO PHILCONSA MEMBERS HIS "BELIEF IN THE CONSTITUTION AS AGAINST THE IDEOLOGY WHICH STATES THAT BEFORE A CONSTITUTION MUST BE IMPLEMENTED, WE MUST LAY THE BASIS AND THE FOUNDATION OF DISCIPLINE WITHIN THE SOCIETY."

2. PRESS REPORTED MARCOS REMINISCED ABOUT SEPTEMBER 1972 DECISION TO DECLARE MARTIAL LAW, TELLING AUDIENCE HE FACED AT THAT TIME A "VERY DIFFICULT CONSTITUTIONAL PROBLEM" OF WHETHER TO WIPE OUT THE ENTIRE EXISTING MACHINERY OF GOVERNMENT BY PROCLAIMING A "REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT" OR TO BE GUIDED BY THE CONSTITUTION. MARCOS SAID HE OPTED TO FOLLOW THE CONSTITUTION ONLY AFTER UNDERGOING A "CRISIS OF CONSCIENCE." HE CONTINUED, "....HISTORY WILL MARK THAT IT WAS MY FEELING EHEN, AND IT IS STILL MY FEELING NOW, THAT THERE MUST BE SOME KIND OF STANDARD GUIDE EVEN FOR THE MOST POWERFUL." IN THE SAME VEIN, MARCOS AVERRED HE WAS ALARMED WHEN PRESENTED BY HIS ADVISERS (PRESUMABLY THE MILITARY) IN EARLY MARTIAL LAW DAYS WITH A "PROSCRIPTION LIST OF MEN WHO WERE ALLEGEDLY OBSTACLES TO A NEW SOCIETY AND THEREFORE SHOULD NOT ONLY BE INCARCERATED BUT ELIMINATED." MARCOS SAID "I FEARED THIS WAS A SELF-DEFEATING PROCESS, FOR IF THE PROSCRIPTION LIST WAS EVEN SO MUCH AS ALLOWED TO BE PUBLISHED AS APPROVED BY THE PLANNING GROUP, THIS WOULD BE UTILIZED AS AN EXCUSE BY ALL PARTIES CLAIMING TO BE SUPPORTERS OF THE NEW REGIME TO GIVE VENT TO THEIR PERSONAL VENGEANCE AND RETALIATION." HE CLAIMED HE OVERRULED THIS ADVICE BECAUSE HE REALIZED THAT ONCE BEGUN, LIQUIDATIONS WOULD HAVE NO END. INSTEAD, HE FOLLOWED THE ONLY ALTERNATIVE, THAT OF ABIDING BY THE CONSTITUTION, WHICH HE CALLED "THE MOST DIFFICULT, COMPLICATED COURSE." MARCOS CAUTIONED THAT THE CONSTITUTION SHOULD GUIDE SUBORDINATE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, WHO "IN THEIR AGGRESSIVE ENTHUSIASM SOMETIMES EXTEND THEIR OPERATIONS BEYOND THE BOUNDS ENVISIONED BY THEIR SUPERIORS."

3. THE GUIDED MANILA PRESS GAVE PROMINENT COVERAGE TO THE PRESIDENT'S REMARKS. DAILY EXPRESS CARRIED CONFIDENTIAL

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HEADLINE, "FM VOWS LOYALTY TO CONSTITUTION." TIMES JOURNAL ECHOED THIS LINE, SAYING MARCOS UPHELD THE CONSTITUTION AND ADVOCATED BASIC PRINCIPLES OF INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS AS OPPOSED TO STATE POLICE POWER. BULLETIN TODAY ADDED THAT MARCOS REITERATED HIS REJECTION OF A "VIOLENT PURGE OF SOCIETY" AND INDICATED HIS DETERMINATION TO PRESS FORWARD WITH "NORMALIZATION."

4. COMMENT: MARCOS' SPEECH CONTRASTED WITH HARD LINE TAKEN BY SECRETARY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE ENRILE LESS THAN ONE WEEK AGO WHEN HE REPORTEDLY PROMISED PROMPT AND POSSIBLY VIOLENT REPRESSION IN THE EVENT DISSENT GETS OUT OF HAND (SEE REFTEL). TURNABOUT AT LEAST PARTIALLY REFLECTS DIFFERENCE IN NATURE OF THE TWO AUDIENCES- ENRILE ADDRESSED CONFERENCE ON CRIME REDUCTION, WHEREAS MARCOS SPOKE TO GROUP COMPOSED OF GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, BUSINESSMEN, AND LAWYERS, WHICH STYLES ITSELF "PEOPLE'S GUARDIAN IN DEFENCE OF THE CONSTITUTION." (PHILCONSA HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY DOMINATED BY MARCOS SUPPORTERS; INDUCTED AS PRESIDENT AT MALACANANG CEREMONY WAS PRESIDENTIAL ASSISTANT AND MARCOS CRONY VICTOR NITUDA). BUT MARCOS' REMARKS ALSO REPRESENT STEPPING BACK FROM POSITION ADOPTED BY ENRILE, AND MAY EVEN HAVE BEEN GENTLE REBUKE OF THE DEFENSE SECRETARY AND HARDLINE MILITARY. REMARKS ARE ALSO IN A CONTRAST TO RECENT HARDLINE DECREE ON SUBVERSION (BEING REPORTED SEPTTEL). IN ANY EVENT, MARCOS EVIDENTLY SAW NEED TO REASSURE PUBLIC HE HAS NO INTENTION OF DIVERGING TOO SHARPLY FROM "SMILING MARTIAL LAW" PRINCIPLE, AS WELL AS TO CAUTION ELEMENTS IN REGIME ADVISING A MORE DRASTIC CRACKDOWN ON DISSENT TO BE MORE MODERATE, AT LEAST IN PUBLIC. IN SO DOINGN MARCOS RELIED ON OFTEN-USED FORMULA OF PROJECTING HIMSELF AS NATION'S BEST HOPE FOR STAVING OFF MORE DRASTIC REPRESSION.SULLIVAN UNQUOTE KISSINGER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MARTIAL LAW, CONSTITUTION, SPEECHES, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 JUL 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: BoyleJA
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976STATE189523
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: DHWOOD
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760295-0901
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t1976073/aaaaacbj.tel
Line Count: 142
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 MANILA 10890
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: BoyleJA
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <01 JUN 2004 by ellisoob>; APPROVED <27 SEP 2004 by BoyleJA>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MARCOS' REMARKS ON CONSTITUTION
TAGS: PINT, RP, (MARCOS, FERDINAND)
To: AUCKLAND WELLINGTON
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006